



BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU

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MINUTES of a Meeting of Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council held on Monday 1st June 2026 at 7pm at Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, TN12 7JU

Present: Councillors J. Buttery (Chair), E. Akenhead, C. Anderson, N. Race, J. Reynolds, A. Stout, C. Brooks (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr Mark Munday (Kent County Council (KCC)), Cllr David Knight (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC))

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Dewdney and Cllr Churchill who are both on holiday and from Cllr Thompson due to family commitments.

2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 5th May 2026 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3. To note Declarations of Interest in any item on the Agenda

None.

4. To adjourn to allow public participation

None.

5. Borough and County Councillors' Announcements

Cllr Munday advised that the proposals for a new primary school in Paddock Wood are in the stage of finish the design and that a public meeting will be held over the summer. KCC will decide between sept and December.

The Badsell Road junction improvement work is a month late starting and the precise layout of the crossing in Mascalls Court Road is still being discussed.

Cllr Knight outlined that committee membership following the recent elections had been progressed and that he and Cllr Mobbs are on the cross-party Local Government Review group and would feedback pertinent information to the PC.

6. Chair's Announcements

- Local Government Re-Organisation update – Cllr Buttery had attended TWBC online briefing and noted that the 30 month deadline for the review of the Local Plan starts in October and will therefore be completed by the Unitary Authority in place at that time.
- Matfield Fete is Saturday 11th July and the Clerk will circulate a rota for the PC stand

7. Planning

1. Confirmation of planning comments submitted – to note

Due to TWBC timeframes the following recommendations had been submitted following agreement by email

- **26/00910/SUB Little Cowden Farm Fairmans Lane Brenchley Tonbridge Kent TN12 7BB**

Submission of Details in relation to Condition 4 - (contamination report); Condition 5 - (verification of completion); Condition 11 - (external lighting); Condition 12 - (foul drainage) ; Condition 16 - (boundary treatment) of 24/02412/FULL

REFUSE:

BMPC objects to the proposed discharge of Conditions 12 and 16.

The only information that has been submitted concerning drainage is a plan showing the location of three proposed treatment plants, without any details of the type of treatment plant proposed or where they would drain to. Nor is it clear from the plan how the lorry for the necessary periodic desilting of the treatment plants would access the plants. BMPC therefore does not consider that sufficient information has been provided to discharge the condition. It should be noted that the pond into which the buildings would have drained is to be filled in under 24/02412 FULL. The stream that runs nearby is a tributary of the Teise which floods frequently downstream of this site, and the Halfway House (the only remaining pub in Brenchley), with its children's playground and garden, lie downhill of the site immediately on the other side of the stream. Any pollution here would have very serious effects for the local community. Further downstream is Furnace Pond, a non-designated heritage asset which hosts a fishing club.

The site plan delineates the boundary of the site with a red line, but no boundary feature is shown separating the three gardens from the proposed wildflower meadow and wildlife receptor site in the wider area that formed part of the proposal for 24/02412/ FULL. BMPC believes that a native species hedge should be provided to separate the gardens from the wider area, preventing the gardens from being enlarged and the wildlife from being disturbed, while improving the biodiversity and landscaping of the site in accordance with Policies LE1, LE6 and LE7 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

- **26/01076/SUB OS Plot 6860 West side of Maidstone Road, Matfield**

Submission of Details in relation to Condition 22 - (surface water drainage scheme) of 22/00757/FULL

REFUSE:

Condition 22 stated:

Development shall not begin in any phase until a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The detailed drainage scheme shall be based upon the Flood Risk Assessment, dated 16th October 2023, prepared by RCD Consultants Ltd, and shall demonstrate that the surface water generated by this development (for all rainfall durations and intensities up to and including the climate change adjusted critical 100 year storm) can be accommodated and disposed of within the curtilage of the site without increase to flood risk on or off-site.

The drainage scheme shall also demonstrate (with reference to published guidance):

- that silt and pollutants resulting from the site use can be adequately managed to ensure there is no pollution risk to receiving waters.

- appropriate operational, maintenance and access requirements for each drainage feature or SuDS component are adequately considered, including any proposed arrangements for future adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker.

The drainage scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

"Reason: To ensure the development is served by satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of surface water and to ensure that the development does not exacerbate the risk of on/off site flooding. These details and accompanying calculations are required prior to the commencement of the development as they form an intrinsic part of the proposal, the approval of which cannot be disaggregated from the carrying out of the rest of the development."

It appears to the Parish Council

- 1) That the 100-year figures show a flood risk for some elements of the scheme;

- 2) That the large soakaways that are proposed to take the water near the Maidstone Road are

probably at least partly on highway land and there is no information as to which organisation, if any, will be responsible for their maintenance;

3) That those large soakaways will probably also interfere with some of the hedgerow planting in the landscape strategy that was an important part of the decision to approve the development, Drawing No.: 1050 - P(0)400 Rev A - Proposed Landscape Strategy.

Therefore the proposed scheme does not appear to comply fully with the condition. The Maidstone Road B2160 in this area has had incidents of significant flooding in the past without the runoff from this development, so there would need to be clear justification for waiving the 100-year requirement.

The condition should also not be discharged without careful consideration of its effect on the landscape of this village in the High Weald National Landscape. The Parish Council notes that approval of the drainage details for the development now known as Holmbush Green at the other end of the village conflicted with the approved landscape details there and led to an unsatisfactory solution as regards the roadside hedge replanting. This should not be allowed to happen again.

2. Planning Applications – to consider

- **26/00858/FULL 4 Bramble Reed, Bramble Reed Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7EX**

Detached garage

RESOLVED to recommend: NEUTRAL

Noting that the proposed garage is located on land that does not appear to have a certificate of lawful use for its change of use from agricultural, but which the planning statement says has been in continuous residential curtilage use for this house for over 44 years. If TWBC has evidence that this is the case, and if TWBC is minded to approve the application, BMPC requests conditions

- removing permitted development rights, given the substantial extensions to the house that were permitted under 25/00616/FULL and the large outbuilding in the back garden which was the subject of 25/02162/LAWPRO
 - concerning materials, unless the Planning Statement is cited in the approved plans, because the type of cladding is only stated in the planning statement
 - concerning root protection of the tree whose root zone the building will intrude upon
 - concerning external lighting.
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- **26/00942/FULL Cork Wood Cottage, Fairmans Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7AL**
Two-storey side & rear extension; first-floor side extension; roof alterations; alterations to fenestration & removal of rooflights; addition of canopy
RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE
The volume of the proposed development conflicts with Policy H11 of the recently adopted Local Plan. The effect would be to create a separate house rather than a subservient Annex. Its design with its Juliet balconies and much increased fenestration does not comply with the High Weald National Landscape planning and dark skies guidance. It conflicts with Neighbourhood Development Plan policies D1 High Weald AONB and design standards, D2 Local architectural style, LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB and LE8 Dark skies. Insufficient details have been provided for the parking on the site to serve 8 bedrooms, and for external lighting to the proposed new patio.
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- **26/00950/FULL Hilltop Cottage, Petteridge Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7LX**
Outbuilding
RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE
The Parish Council notes that this application has been renamed from Hilltop Cottage to Motley House since the time when the Council was consulted about it. It is clear from the red line on the block plans that the proposed outbuilding would be within the curtilage of Motley House and the application form states that the proposed outbuilding is to serve Motley House. Given

the volume of the extension to Motley House permitted under 13/00796/HOUSE and the double garage permitted under 16/503103/FULL, it appears that this proposal would conflict with the volume requirement of policy H11 of the recently adopted Local Plan. The Parish Council also considers that the proposed outbuilding would be too close to the hedge/trees and would damage their roots. It would extend the built area and consequent light spill from the tight-knit cluster near the pub further into the High Weald National Landscape countryside. No information is provided concerning foul drainage for the proposed WC in the building and it appears that the existing garage would obstruct the line of a drain through the garden to join the road.

If, however, TWBC is minded to approve the application, the Parish Council requests conditions

- removing permitted development rights
 - concerning root protection for the hedge/trees
 - concerning exterior lighting
 - concerning foul drainage.
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- **26/00957/FULL Hodge Cottage, The Green, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7JU**
Driveway widening; new fence & gate
RESOLVED to recommend: APPROVE
Noting, however, that work has already started and that therefore the application is at least part retrospective.

 - **26/00983/FULL Matfield Gate, Sophurst Lane, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7LH**
Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 22/02354/FULL - (removal of 4no. rooflights and replacement with 3no.; part separation of the annex and the main house)
RESOLVED to recommend: APPROVE
The Parish Council notes that this application appears identical to application 26/00768/NMAMD, to which it is presumably an alternative.
Given the permissions and amendments that have already been granted, the Parish Council is content with the proposed development. However, the Parish Council seeks assurance that the relevant conditions attached to the original application will continue to apply. The Parish Council also requests an informative concerning blackout blinds for the rooflights and the major areas of fenestration in order to conserve the dark skies of the High Weald National Landscape in accordance with Policy LE8 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the HWNL dark skies guidance.

 - **26/01140/FULL Little Dunks Farm, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley, Kent, TN12 7HX**
Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 24/00618/FULL - (Changes to external materials, canopy, windows and boundary treatment)
RESOLVED to recommend: REFUSE
The proposed red cedar cladding would make the building appear more domestic and this timber is not characteristic of the High Weald. The Parish Council notes that the delegated report for the previous application stated "The fenestration has been kept fairly minimal and thus would not appear overly domestic". The PC objects to the proposed increase in fenestration to the rear elevation and the provision of two new windows to the first floor "storage area". The proposal conflicts with Policies D1 High Weald AONB and design standards, D2 Local architectural style, LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB and LE8 Dark skies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and with High Weald National Landscape design and dark skies guidance.
The proposed 21m long close-boarded fence would be inappropriate in this farmstead setting, especially if it is not proposed to soften the line with hedgerow planting. This further division of the farmstead, a non-designated heritage asset, would conflict with Policy LE3 of the NDP.

3. Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Review Call for Sites – to note and consider Housing Needs Survey

Following outcomes of the Meeting for Parish Chairs on 18th May, the Council considered two quotes for undertaking a Housing Needs Survey which is required to feed into the review of the Local Plan, given the increase in the number of houses the Borough is required to deliver, via an imminent Call for Sites.

It was agreed that to give the widest possible result further questions would be added and sent to all properties, including those without a current housing need but who may wish to downsize or for other social reasons.

The quoted amount of £3165 plus VAT was agreed however due to the final number of properties in the parish being unknown this may increase by a small amount. It was noted that the sum allocated in the budget was insufficient for this, at £2500, and that the additional costs would be taken from general reserves

RESOLVED to engage RACE (Rural and Community Housing Enabling) to undertake a Housing Needs Survey on all properties in the parish

4. Public Consultation on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Draft Local Validation Checklist 2026 – to consider responding

The Council noted the documents, which had not been available to view in full until the day of the meeting.

It was agreed that Cllr Akenhead would draft and circulate a proposed response, to be agreed by majority via email, and to be submitted by the deadline of 11th June.

Action Cllr Akenhead, Clerk

5. Aligning Parish and Town Council Elections with a new Unitary Authority – to consider response to TWBC

The Council considered the government's proposal to align Parish Council elections, due in 2028 for BMPC, with the elections to the shadow Unitary Authority, due in May 2027. A majority expressed a preference for retaining the existing schedule.

It was agreed that Cllr Buttery and the Clerk would draft and circulate a proposed response, to be agreed by majority via email, and to be submitted by the deadline of 11th June.

Action Cllr Buttery, Clerk

6. TWBC's draft statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – to note response submitted

The Council noted the submission which had been agreed by majority via email and submitted on 18th May.

8. Audit and Accounts 2025-26 – to approve and sign

The Council noted the Interim Audit report from November 2025.

1. Report and Statement of Internal Controls – to approve and sign

The Clerk had prepared the report to assist the Council in assessing how duties are completed and advised that following the Year End 31st March 2026 Internal Audit, the IA Report (Page 3) has been signed by our Internal Auditor, see item 3 below. The y/e VAT Claim in the sum of £3,654.79 has already been received (this is the last of the 4 quarterly VAT claims for the 2025-26 year).

The period for the public rights scrutiny is 8th June to 17th July (inclusive) and the notice will be dated 3rd June, these dates comply with requirements and have been approved by the Auditor.

RESOLVED that the Chair and Clerk should sign the Report and Statement of Internal Controls for the year ended 31.3.26.

2. Annual Governance Statement 2025-26 – to approve and sign

Councillors were reminded that they must satisfy themselves that each of the ten statements in Section 1 (page 4) are agreed.

RESOLVED that the Chair and Clerk may sign and submit the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26

3. Accounting Statements 2025-26 – to approve and sign

Councillors were reminded that they must satisfy themselves that the accounting statements in Section 2 (page 5) as presented are in accordance with the agreed accounts for the year, which include the detailed receipts and payments and bank reconciliations provided for scrutiny at this meeting.

The Accounting Statements had been signed by the RFO.

RESOLVED that the Chair may sign the Accounting Statements for 2025-26 and that these should be submitted together with the Annual Governance Statement and other supporting documents to the external auditor.

4. Year End 31.3.26 Internal Audit Report – to receive and note

The end of year Internal Audit report, undertaken on 13th May 2026, was received and noted. The Auditor's separate year-end report to support the summary contained within the AGAR will also be submitted with the AGAR.

9. Clerk's Report with works list

1. Repair to Brenchley Toilet path – to note unbudgeted expenditure

Due to concerns about tripping hazard this work was undertaken from general reserves in the sum of £392.11

- Summer Newsletter was noted
- The work on the easement for the pond is in progress, solicitors are discussing the draft
- A site meeting held with contractor for pond work and the weed control specialists regarding the Japanese Knotweed have reviewed the area in advance of treatment work in the autumn.
- Options for watering the yew hedge on the roadside at JVMG are being explored
- Site meeting with Laddingfold Engineering regarding fabrication of railings outside Brenchley toilets is in progress
- Hanging baskets are up at the Pavilion, with watering system in place
- Full EICR report including discharge testing of emergency lighting test and PAT testing has been booked for the Pavilion and an electrical test for the toilet blocks.
- The Cricketers have installed their shelving in the cupboard in the Pavilion

10. RFO's Report with budget monitoring

1. Accounts payable

3843	HMRC	Tax and NI May 26	£819.68	£819.68
3844	C. Brooks	May 26 mileage	£21.60	Salary Balance £45.85
3845	Sarah Castro-Edwards	Mileage	£10.80	£10.80
3846	Waste Way	Apr 26 bin collect	Porters Wood/Brenchley Rec	£134.40
3847	Capel Groundcare	Playground Inspection	Monthly premium	May 26
3848	Capel Groundcare	SIDs Monthly contract	May 26	£194.35
3850	Microshade	May 26 Software support		£216.94
3851	A Castro-Edwards	2x MP Cleaning 1.5 hours	3rd May, 26 May	£51.00
3852	CHCC	Donation of £500 for defib		£500.00
3853	Christine Churchill	Reimbursement of travel expenses		£15.90
3854	Garden Proud	JVMG Gardening 4 hours	to 29 Apr	£120.00

3855	Piggotts	Flag Pole Maintenance x2 (MP, JV)	£1,006.46
3856	Capel Cottage Nursery	Hanging baskets and plants	£70.00
3857	GMT Property Maintenance	Bus shelter improvements: shingles and repainting	£1,105.18
3858	Mulberry Local Authority	Internal Audit and AGAR	£136.50
3859	David Hanmore	Allotment fee return (IR)	£30.00
3860	Trueplan	Land Registry Compliant Title Plan	£474.00
3861	Ian Woods	Materials for Cricket Cupboard (IR)	£166.73
3862	Ian Woods	Materials for Cricket Cupboard (IR)	£91.12
3863	GMT Property Maintenance	Mat Pav Hanging Baskets (not IR)& Decorating (IR)	£158.00

Payments by Credit Card Apr expenditure (total) DD £610.69

3864	Rebuild cost Assessment	Revaluation for Matfield Pavilion	£210.00
	Amazon	Camera for speedwatch	£295.00
	Asda	Refreshments for Annual Parish Meeting	£61.72
	Amazon	SAN Disk for Speedwatch camera	£40.97
		Monthly card fee	£3.00

Interim Payments made

3865	Cooper Burnett	Money on Account Pond drain project	£2,580.00
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Standing Orders and Direct Debits For Information

3866	SO C. Brooks	Salary May 26	£2,119.82
3867	SO Sarah Castro-Edwards	Salary May 26	£721.04
3868	DD Smart Pension	May 26 Pension Payment	£953.33
3869	DD EDF Energy	Pavilion Electricity Apr 26	£120.44
3870	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Brenchley Toilets Apr 26	£24.66
3871	DD EDF Energy	Electricity Matfield Toilets	£35.00
3872	DD Smart Pension	Apr 26 Pension admin fee	£26.40
3873	SO Churchill Group	May 26 Toilet Cleaning services	£913.46
3874	DD SSE	Streetlight electricity Apr 26	£98.71
3875	DD Everflow	Water Charges 22/06 - 21/07	£58.74
3876	DD First Com Tec Works	Monthly Phone and Broadband Service May 25	£197.73
3877	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge May 26 tbc	£10.00

The RFO provided invoices for scrutiny the accounts were approved for payment and would be authorised by Cllrs Buttery and Cllr Anderson.

11. Meetings attended, reports by Councillors and urgent business

Cllr Akenhead, Buttery and Stout had met with Kent High Weald Partnership earlier in the day regarding proposals for coppicing along the track and aspects of a proposed management plan looking ahead to 2035.

12. Date of next meeting: Monday 6 July 2026, 7pm, Matfield Pavilion